

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 03409 071930Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 SY-05 SCCT-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 842

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3409

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CDES, HO(CYPHER, MICHAEL J.)

SUBJECT: GOH REPORT ON CYPHER DETENTION AND MURDER

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 3394, (B) TEGUCIGALPA 3181

1. THE GOH REPORT TRANSMITTED BY NOTE AUGUST 6 AND TRANSLATED IN REFTEL A ADDS LITTLE TO WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN THE PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE SUMMARIZED IN REFTEL B. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE FORTHCOMING OTHER THAN WHAT SURFACES FROM THE TRIALS OF THE TWELVE CHARGED. AT THIS POINT THE EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT A FORMAL WRITTEN REPORT OF THE HIGH LEVEL MILITARY COMMISSION EXISTS IN ANY MUCH MORE DETAILED FORM THAN HAS BEEN ALREADY MADE PUBLIC.

2. TWO ERRORS IN THE REPORT ARE IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT. THE MISPELLING OF FR. CYPHER'S NAME HAS FOLLOWED THAT GIVEN BY THE CHURCH IN ITS PRONOUNCEMENTS. THE AMERICAN CONSUL INVOLVED WAS NOT CLYDE SNIDER, WHO HAS RETIRED.

3. CONSOFF IN TALK YESTERDAY WITH HEAD OF NATIONAL POLICE (FUSEP), COL. OMAR ZELAYA, LEARNED THAT FURTHER DETAILS OF CRIME WERE GIVEN TO HLMC BY AN AGENT OF DIN, ONE OF THREE WHO WERE PRESENT DURING THE INTERROGATION OF THE PRISONERS AT LOS HORCONES. ALLEGEDLY, MAJOR CHINCHILLA HAD CONSIDERED MURDERING THE DIN AGENTS AS WELL TO ELIMINATE

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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 03409 071930Z

ALL WITNESSES NOT ACTUALLY INVOLVED IN KILLINGS BUT, SINCE

THEY WERE ARMED, HE INSTEAD BRIBED THEM TO MAINTAIN SILENCE. WHEN HLMC BEGAN INVESTIGATION, ONE AGENT GAVE ENTIRE STORY TO COMMISSION.

4. COL. ZELAYA ALSO COMMENTED THAT CHINCHILLUI HAD APPARENTLY BEEN BOUGHT OFF BY CATTLEMEN TO FORCIBLY REPRESS COMPESINOS. HE IMPLIED CHINCHILLA EITHER LOST HIS SENSES OR WAS DRUNK WHEN HE KILLED FIRST PRISONER TO INDUCE OTHERS TO TALK DURING INTERROGATION. HAVING KILLED ONE HE THEN HAD TO KILL ALL TO DO AWAY WITH WITNESSES. FR. BETANCOURT, WHO HAD BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN COMPESINO MOVEMENTS, WAS REAL TARGET OF CATTLEMEN WHO WANTED HIM TO BE FORCED TO CONFESS TO "SUBVERSIVE" ACTIVITIES. ZELAYA ADMITTED THAT INVESTIGATION SHOWED CYPHER WAS INNOCENT BYSTANDER SWEEPED UP IN EVENTS OF THE DAY.

5. ZELAYA ALSO REFERRED TO TAPE OF BETANCOURT'S CONFESSION TO INVOLVEMENT IN ARMING COMPESINOS FOR GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES. DESPITE CIRCUMSTANCES OF "CONFESSION", APPARENTLY SOME MILITARY AT LEAST HALFWAY BELIEVE IT.  
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